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August 5, 2002

TO: EACH SUPERVISOR

FROM: P. MICHAEL FREEMAN

SAFE HAVEN PROCEDURES/IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

On June 4, 2002, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion introduced by Supervisor Don Knabe, outlining recommendations from the Safe Haven Task Force on a comprehensive 12-point plan to help end child abandonment. The second recommendation within that 12-point plan identified a need to create new Los Angeles County Safe Haven sites.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department was directed to determine the feasibility of Los Angeles County fire stations being designated as new Safe Haven sites and report back to the Board within 60 days.

Attached is the Fire Department's implementation report, as directed by the Board, as well as the Fire Department's procedures. This implementation report outlines the feasibility, timelines and cost considerations for designating Los Angeles County Fire Department fire stations as Safe Haven sites.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (323) 881-2401.

PMF:GH:ll

Attachments

c: David Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer; Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer; Jessie Riggans, Records Management; Director of Children & Family Services; Eric Young, County Counsel; Fire Chief John Penido; Louisa Ollague, Deputy; Randi Tahara, Deputy; Joseph Charney, Deputy; Matthew Knabe, Deputy; and Jennifer Plaisted, Deputy

DRAFT

August 5, 2002

LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO BOARD'S REQUEST FOR SAFE HAVEN IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

At the June 4, 2002 Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Knabe made the following request:

"The County Fire Chief and Director of Health Services (DHS), in consultation with the Sheriff, the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs Association, and the Los Angeles Area Fire Chiefs Association, are to determine the feasibility of implementing these new Safe Haven sites (County and municipal fire stations, County hospitals without emergency departments, County health clinics, and the County's Emergency Medical Teams). Include a timeline and cost consideration and report back to the Board within 60 days."

Feasibility:

The Los Angeles County Fire Department believes it is feasible to implement Safe Haven sites at all Los Angeles County fire stations, under the current law, utilizing the following procedures. However, these procedures would be feasible at the fire station locations only. Surrender of an infant to fire engine company personnel in a location other than a fire station would not be feasible at this time. Non-fire station surrenders would require further study after actual initial implementation of fire stations being designated as Safe Haven sites.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department, along with the Los Angeles Area Fire Chiefs Association, is in support of designating fire stations as additional Safe Haven sites. The Los Angeles County Fire Department is willing to implement this plan within the timelines outlined in this document. However, the Los Angeles Area Chiefs Association is not ready to implement without further discussion. Although there may be very few infant surrenders at fire stations, it is the Los Angeles County Fire Department's intent to treat this type of incident, as closely as possible, to any instance where an infant is brought into a fire station in need of treatment from an illness or injury.

Procedures:

Procedures for a Safe Haven surrender at a fire station would include:

- Accepting the infant and notifying dispatch of a Safe Haven infant surrender.
- A paramedic squad (if one was not already at the fire station) and an ambulance would be dispatched to the fire station.
- Furnish the surrendering adult with a packet containing an optional medical questionnaire, an information sheet, and a copy of the infant's coded, confidential bracelet.
- The infant will be evaluated, treated for any medical needs, and coded, confidential bracelet will be placed around his/her ankle.
- The base station hospital would be notified, and paramedics would accompany the infant to the nearest Emergency Department Approved for Pediatrics (EDAP).
- A copy of the infant's rescue report (EMS report) would be transmitted to the Department of Children and Family Services upon arrival at the hospital.
- Hospital personnel would be responsible for filing a formal investigative report with the Department of Children and Family Services.

Pre-assembled Safe Haven packets will be provided to all fire stations at no cost to the Fire Department. These packets will consist of:

A 9 x 12 inch manila envelope identified as "**Newborn Safe Surrender Kit**" containing:

1. Los Angeles County Fire Department Safe Haven Procedure sheet.
2. Coded, confidential ankle bracelet for the infant.
3. Business reply mail return envelope containing:
 - a. Safe Haven medical questionnaire (English and Spanish).
 - b. Information sheet (English and Spanish).
 - c. Matching coded, confidential bracelet.

A basic Safe Haven training module is being developed by the Department of Children and Family Services. It will be modified for the Los Angeles County Fire Department's use, and presented to its employees in-house, thereby keeping training costs to a minimum.

Implementation Timelines:

Los Angeles County Fire Department can implement the Safe Haven program at each fire station by August 20, 2002, provided that the following requirements and deadlines are met:

- The Board designates Los Angeles County fire stations as additional Safe Haven sites on August 20, 2002.
- The Los Angeles County Fire Department receives the Safe Haven Surrender kits (pre-assembled and ready to deliver to each fire station) from Supervisor Knabe's office by August 12, 2002.
- By August 12, 2002, the Department of Children and Family Services is to ensure that the training delivered to DCFS staff is consistent with the procedures we have devised for implementation effective August 20, 2002.
- The Department of Health Services will notify all EDAP (Emergency Department Approved for Pediatrics) facilities and the medical community by August 12, 2002.

Costs:

Costs of implementing this program are anticipated to be minimal, provided that the kits and training module are provided to the Los Angeles County Fire Department from the Department of Children and Family Services.

Recommendation:

The existing Safe Haven law should be modified so that it clearly defines that all infant surrenders to fire department personnel entail only "physical custody surrender and transport to the hospital" and allow the transfer of responsibility of the infant and all reporting requirements to the eligible receiving hospital, upon fire department transfer of the infant.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES FOR ACCEPTING A NEWBORN UNDER THE CALIFORNIA SAFE HAVEN LAW

The California Safe Haven Law, as amended, allows a person to surrender a minor child (72 hours or younger) to any firefighter on duty at any one of our fire stations. Under certain circumstances, they may do so discreetly without fear of being prosecuted for child abandonment.

PROCEDURES

1. Welcome the parent or person surrendering the infant. Do not be judgmental (this is an emotional and difficult time for the person).
2. Ascertain that the infant is under 72 hours or younger. Accept the infant (even if it appears older than 72 hours) and begin to assess for any medical needs.
3. Notify Command and Control of a still alarm at the station and request a paramedic unit (if one is not in quarters) and an ambulance to respond. Initiate an EMS report on the infant.
4. Locate and open the Newborn Safe Surrender Kit. Hand the surrendering person the inner business reply mail envelope containing the Safe Haven medical questionnaire, an information sheet and a copy of the coded, confidential bracelet. Place the smaller coded, confidential ankle bracelet on the infant and record the code on the EMS report.
5. Once on scene, paramedics shall assume custody of the infant, initiate base hospital contact, and continue to assess and provide for any medical needs of the infant.
6. Paramedics shall accompany the infant to the receiving hospital and transfer custody to a designated hospital employee. Paramedics will notify Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) while at the receiving hospital. The preferred method of notification is to fax a copy of the EMS report to DCFS. DCFS fax number is (213) 739-7011. The receiving hospital will take custody of the infant, and make phone notification with DCFS.
7. A Form 220, Special Interest Incident notification will be completed and phoned to Command and Control by the captain at the Safe Haven surrender site. The captain will also brief the jurisdictional battalion chief who will decide if further notifications are necessary at that time.